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Sent: 12/21/2017 2:46:07 PM
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Subject: [External] DOT suggests changing 'burdensome' pipeline and LNG rules

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By Ben Lefebvre

12/21/2017 02:44 PM EDT

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration will consider easing or changing rules governing pipelines and LNG transportation as a way to foster domestic energy production, the Transportation Department said.

Transportation made the announcement in its official response to President Donald Trump's March 28 order directing the department to reduce regulatory burdens.

DOT said it was analyzing PHMSA's current rule requiring companies to upgrade a pipeline's safety measures if the number of people living near a stretch of the line increases, DOT said. Current PHMSA rules require the company to replace the existing pipe with stronger or thicker material in such areas or to lower the pipeline pressure.

PHMSA is also reviewing a final rule proposal that would allow pipeline builders to use more plastic in construction, something it said would save companies money, Transportation said.

DOT also said it was considering having PHMSA rewrite its hazardous materials regulations to allow companies to transport LNG in railway bulk tank cars, a move it said would alleviate the need for companies to seek a separate permit to do so.

PHMSA was also analyzing whether to ease the regulations governing where small-scale LNG plants can be built, DOT said.

Finally, DOT said it was weighing whether to scrap a regulation requiring existing LNG import terminals to obtain a \$350,000 license before they can take steps to add export facilities.

WHAT'S NEXT: The department will implement the recommendations "as soon as possible."

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